Cultural Daily

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Alexis Rhone Fancher: Four Poems

Alexis Rhone Fancher · Thursday, July 13th, 2017

Alexis Rhone Fancher is the author of *How I Lost My Virginity To Michael Cohen and other heart stab poems,* (2014), *State of Grace: The Joshua Elegies,* (2015), and the brand new erotic, LA-centric collection, *Enter Here*. She is published in *The Best American Poetry, 2016, Rattle, Slipstream, Plume, Nashville Review, Diode, Glass,* and elsewhere. Her photos are published worldwide. Since 2013 Alexis has been nominated for 11 Pushcart Prizes and 4 Best of the Net awards. Alexis is poetry editor of Cultural Weekly. She lives in Los Angeles. www.alexisrhonefancher.com

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I Was Hovering Just Below the Hospital Ceiling, Contemplating My Death

When I glanced down and saw my body,
the suffering, damaged girl.

My beloved, nowhere to be found
had died on impact.

Now the ER doctors say I can go either way.

So I hover on the Sistine ceiling of the
I.C.U., undecided, my dead lover's
hand reaching for me
like God stretched for Adam.

The tubes and machines that keep me
earthbound give way.

We soar above the hospital morgue,
backtrack the highway, our bodies
unbroken, the crash spliced out.

My mother keens beside my hospital bed,

her fingers tangled in my blood-soaked hair,
picking at pieces of windshield.
Holding tight.

Years later I re-trace the road
between death and Santa Barbara,
how he cradled my head in his lap as he drove.

How he didn't want to go with me.
How I always got what I wanted.

All my life, such a greedy girl.

First published in *Glass, A Journal of Poetry*, 2017

(Author's Commentary: When I was twenty, a highway collision killed my fiancé and my unborn child. I survived only because I was asleep, my head on my fiance's lap, when the driver of the other vehicle veered into our lane and crashed into us at 70mph. I have tried for years to write about the immediate aftermath. This poem is the first time I got it right.)

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FREEWAY SEX

There's a 19 car pile up on Vasquez Rocks.
You're late. This would be a good excuse.

I want to grind that thought out like your cigarette.
Drive right over it.

You were dead to me the first time
I found motel matches
in your pocket.

You brought me offramp roses.
Your fingers smelled like someone else.

When the traffic doesn't move
when I'm lost again in Pasadena
and my pussy dampens,
I think of fellating you on the freeway
to pass the time.

Is that what you're thinking of?

From the 5 to the 2 to the 134.
Take the Pearblossom Highway.
Make a smooth transition.

Tell me exactly how it’s going down and
I’ll write that poem.

The one where you’re supposed to
be on time, and I’m supposed to care.

First published in *Ragazine, 2015*

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FOR THE SAD WAITRESS AT THE DINER IN BARSTOW

beyond the kitchen’s swinging door,
beyond the order wheel and the pass-through piled
high with bacon, hash browns, biscuits and gravy,

past the radio, tuned to 101.5-FM
All Country – All the Time,
past the truckers overwhelming the counter,
all grab-ass and longing.

in the middle of morning rush you’ll
catch her, in a wilted pink uniform,
coffee pot fused in her grip, staring over
the top of your head

you’ll follow her gaze, out the fly-specked, plate
glass windows, past the parking lot,

watch as she eyes those 16-wheelers barreling
down the highway, their mud guards
adorned with chrome silhouettes of naked women
who look nothing like her.

the cruel sun throws her inertia in her face.
this is what regret looks like.

maybe she’s searching for that hot day in August
when she first walked away from you.

there’s a choking sound
a semi makes, when it pulls off the
highway; that downshift a death rattle
she’s never gotten used to.

maybe she’s looking for a way back.
maybe she’s ready to come home.

(But for now) she’s lost herself

between the register and the door, the endless
business from table to kitchen, she’s

as much leftover as those sunny side eggs,
yolks hardening on your plate.

First published in *The San Pedro River Review, 2016*

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when your mother convinces you to take in your homeless younger sister

She will date your boyfriend.
She’ll do it better than you ever did.
She’ll have nothing but time.
He’ll start showing up when you leave,
train her to make him the perfect BLT,
(crusts off, avocado on the side),
encourage his cheating heart,
suck his dick so good he’ll think
he’s died and gone to Jesus.

Your sister will borrow your clothes,
and look better in them than you ever did.
Someone will see her with your boyfriend
at the Grove, agonize for days
before deciding not to tell you.
Meanwhile he’ll buy her that fedora you
admired in Nordstrom’s window, the last one
in your size.

When you complain, your mother
will tell you it’s about time you learned to share.

While you’re at work, your sister will tend your garden,
weed the daisies, coax your gardenias into bloom.
No matter how many times you remind her,
she will one day forget to lock the gate;
your cat and your lawn chairs will disappear.

Your mother will say it serves you right.

Your sister will move into your boyfriend’s
big house in Laurel Canyon. He will ignore her,
and she will make a half-hearted suicide attempt;
you’ll rescue her once again.

Your mother will wash her hands of the pair of you,
then get cancer and die.

Smell the white gardenias in the yard.
Cherish their heady perfume. Float them in a crystal bowl.
Forgive your sister as she has forgiven you.

First published in *Ragazine, 2015.*

(Author photo by James Fancher)

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